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SUBJECT: SLM/W Splinter Leader Musa Declines U.S. Visit

1. (SBU) SUMMARY: A conversation with SLM/A-Wahid break away and Declaration of Commitment signer Abdulrahman Musa revealed Musa's ambition to organize and lead the splinter group. Musa refuses to accompany SLM/A leader Minni Minawi to Washington, concerned that this would jeopardize his position among his supporters. He advocated self-defense assistance for villages in Darfur and asked the international community to support capacity training for future committee nominees. END SUMMARY.

Abdulrahman Musa Declines Invite to United States

2. (SBU) During a July 19 meeting with S/CRS Senior Security Advisor Tod Wilson, Abdulrahman Musa gracefully declined his invitation to join SLM/A-leaders Minni Minawi's delegation to the United States. His stated reason was that the SLM/A-Wahid pro-DPA group had neither received a direct invitation nor been allowed to choose its own representatives. Therefore, it would be politically unseemly to participate in the visit. Privately, Musa indicated that it would cause considerable difficulties for him within the group and with his efforts to develop a base of support in Darfur. At a separate meeting with Mohammad Adam, an in-house rival and senior representative to the Ceasefire Commission, Adam told Wilson that Musa could participate in the visit if Minawi personally invited him, but not as a representative of the SLM/A-Wahid splinter group.

3. (SBU) COMMENT: Musa is trying hard both to demonstrate his leadership and organizational abilities, as well as to shore up his support within the splinter group. He approaches issues associated with the SLM/A-Wahid splinter group strategically, has good organizational skills, and a sound understanding of the DPA. However, members of his group complain that he is an academic that has spent most of his time in France. He has no militia force or popular following within Darfur, though to remedy the latter, Musa is starting to hold a series of meetings, beginning with his family first, followed by his clan, and then broadening the effort to include the IDP camps. He recently spent several days visiting family in his home town of Korma and the surrounding villages. He planned to discuss the DPA, including why he supported while SLM/A-Wahid did not, with umdas and sheiks of his tribe in the nearby IDP camps. (NOTE: Wilson provided Musa with copies of the USAID-produced Arabic DPA summary, which he greatly appreciated. END NOTE.)

4. (SBU) COMMENT CONTINUED: Musa had also met with Embassy officers prior to traveling to El Fasher and presented an ambitious plan to hold a series of meetings in the three Darfur capitals culminating in a conference which would reorganize the SLM into a true political movement with a charter and elected officials. He asked the Embassy for USD 5 million to fund this proposal, though he had reportedly also shopped the proposal to a least two other embassies for a cost of USD 3 million and USD 7 million, respectively. END COMMENT.

SLM/A-Wahid Splinter Group Setting Up Offices

5. (SBU) Musa has also begun to setup offices for his splinter

group. He opened an office in Nyala a week ago and hopes to open offices in El Fasher and El Geneina in the coming weeks. The group is also looking for a suitable location in Khartoum, but indicated that they would only need a small office there as they preferred to work DPA implementation issues in Darfur - implying that they preferred to keep their distances from the GNU. Wilson informed Musa of the two DPA Implementation Offices the Embassy was helping the AU establish in El Fasher and Khartoum, and that it was the U.S. intent that his group would have some office space in both. Musa hopes that his group would ratify its nominations for the DPA commissions next week in Khartoum. He stated that they would focus the nominations on four or five organizations and not attempt to place members on every commission and committee.

Security Priority - Promoting Village Self-Defense

16. (SBU) Musa said that his first priority was improved security. He stated that he and his colleagues were assisting their people in the Korma area to improve their security posture. When queried how his efforts would stay within the parameters of the DPA, he quickly clarified that there were plenty of weapons already in all the villages and that they intended to improve the villages' self defense capacity by developing routine early warning posts, immediate reaction groups and training drills, etc. His group did not intend to continue to fight with SLM/A-Minawi forces. In fact, he claimed that his tribe had already formed a restitution group and was arranging a meeting to start traditional negotiations. Musa concluded that in addition to improving self defense capacity, AMIS had to start more proactive patrolling and visibility in the IDP camps. AMIS did not need to try to protect everyone. They only had to be recognized by the population as improving the security environment in order to demonstrate their value.

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Int'l Community Should Provide Capacity Training

17. (SBU) Asked what the international community could do to move the implementation process forward, Musa focused most of his answer on increasing the capacity of nominated commission members. He was adamant about providing all of them with English language training. (Note: The UK is offering some ESL training. End note.) He mentioned management, negotiation, and organizational skills training so that they could hold effective meetings. Musa also mentioned the need for some small reconstruction programs in populated villages, including training programs such as animal husbandry and home economics to prepare IDPs for their return home.

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